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REMARKS

Claims 25-27, 29, 30, and 32 are all the claims presently pending in the application.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claim 31 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. While Applicants maintain that all of the previously pending claims are allowable, merely in an effort to speed prosecution and place the Application in condition for immediate allowance, Applicants have canceled claims 9, 11, 17, 22-24, 28, and 31 without prejudice or disclaimer and amended claim 25 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 31.

It is noted that the claim amendments are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further, Applicants specifically state that no amendment to any claim herein should be construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the amended claim.

Furthermore, Applicants are not conceding in this application that the canceled claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuation patent applications.

Applicants submit that entry of the claim amendments is proper since the claim amendments do not raise new issues, which would require further consideration and/or search. Indeed, as indicated above, Applicants have merely amended the claims in accordance with the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 25-27, 29, 30, and 32, all of the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record

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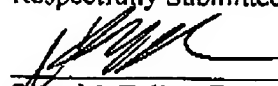
and are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, Applicants requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The undersigned authorizes the Commissioner to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Date: February 3, 2010

Respectfully Submitted,


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FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that I am filing this paper via facsimile, to Group Art Unit 1793, at (571) 273-8300, on February 3, 2010.

Date: February 3, 2010

Respectfully Submitted,


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